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CUBANS RELEASE TWO U.S. WOMEN

Donovan Expects 20 Other Prisoners Within 6 Weeks

Miami, Fla., March 17 (AP)—Two United States women, prisoners in Cuban jails since 1960, returned to their homeland today and some twenty other United States prisoners are expected within six weeks.

James Donovan, New York attorney who negotiated for the prisoners' release, said the freedom of the other Americans depends on the speed with which Premier Fidel Castro receives all the \$53,000,000 ransom for the Cuban invasion prisoners.

He said he thought there were about 35 other prisoners but that Castro did not consider all of them from the United States.

About half of the ransom supplies—medicine and baby foods—have been received by the Cubans, Donovan said.

Hopes To Free Skindivers

Donovan also said that he hoped for the early release of nine skindivers arrested recently by Cubans. The nine said they were fishermen on the way from the United States to the Dominican Republic.

"I expect within a few weeks by simply providing a few basic corroborating materials showing they were actually shipwrecked and washed ashore, they will be freed," Donovan said at a news conference.

The two women, Mrs. Geraldine Shamma, in her thirties, a native of Boston, and Mrs. Martha O'Neal, whose parents live in Orlando, Fla., talked to reporters after they checked through immigration.

First Wish Is Hot Dog

Both looked tired but appeared to be in good physical condition. Neither knew until 11 A.M. today that she was to be freed.

"The first thing I'm going to have is a hot dog," Mrs. O'Neal said.

The women had been charged with counterrevolutionary activity and had been sentenced to ten years.

Donovan, who also negotiated with the Russians for the exchange of the Soviet spy Rudolph Abel for Francis Gary Powers, American U-2 pilot, said he visited all the prisoners during his four-day tour in Havana.

He reported the condition of all reasonably good under the circumstances and that there had been a recent improvement in their condition.

He said Castro told him that the only term for the release of the nine skindivers was to prove the innocence of counterrevolutionary activities. He said there were nostrings attached to the release of the two women today.

The women were escorted into an auditorium at the service club at Homestead base, near Miami. Donovan and the women appeared together.

Mrs. Shamma, a white-haired stocky woman wearing dark glasses, was asked her age. She replied, "Don't make me feel any worse than I do."

She said she was arrested November 4, 1960, at her home. She said her husband died in 1950.

She said six Cuban intelligence soldiers took her to headquarters and that she didn't learn until later she was accused of counterrevolutionary activity. She declined to give the specific charge against her.

Mrs. O'Neal appeared near the edge of tears during part of her interview, but later brightened.